

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE

August 14, 2001

Minutes

Member Present:

WRIGHT, Carolyn – GOPB/DNR
AUSTIN, Lloyd – DWR
HOPKIN, George – UDAF
GRUBAUGH-LITTIG, Pam – DOGM
CARTER, Kevin – SITLA
GEORGESON, Michael – DEQ/Drinking Water
SCHLOTTHAUER, Bill – Water Rights
CANNING, Michael – DWR
CHAMEY, Jerry – UDOT
PARKER, Randy – UDAF
PITKIN, Jay – DEQ/Water Quality
MORTONSEN, Duane - DERR

Others Present:

DANIELS, Ronald – DOGM
BINGHAM, Elden – UDOT
SOWARDS, Glade – NR/ADMIN
NITSCHKE-SINCLEAR, Jean - BLM
HOWELL, David - BLM
LANDURETH, Brenda – DNR/ADMIN

I. Approval of Minutes

Bill Schlotthauer called the meeting to order at approximately 9:10 a.m. George Hopkin made a motion to approve the July 10, 2001 minutes as submitted. Pam Grubaugh-Littig seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

II. Special Presentations

State Hazard Mitigation Plan

The presenter did not appear; therefore this item was tabled and will be rescheduled.

Book Cliffs Resource Management Plan Bonanza Herd EA/FONSI – #01-999

Jean Nitschke-Sinclear, BLM

Book Cliffs Resource Management Plan Amendment involving the Bonanza Wild Horse Herd Area - Environmental Assessment Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

BLM stated that the Wildlife/Livestock (Alternative C) is the preferred alternative. The habitat carrying capacity is at a maximum level with 85 wild horses. Herd management, adoption and water supply were discussed. This alternative will not have any impact on mineral, oil and gas development and will support wild horses. A copy of the document was distributed. See attachment for a brief overview.

Center for Policy and Planning/Energy Office – Bill Schlotthauer

John Harja, Carolyn Wright and Nancy Keate have moved to DNR. Carolyn is located in suite 3230 (across from Law Enforcement at the end of the hall on the third floor). Her telephone number is 538-5535. John Harja has an office next to Kathleen Clarke in Administration in suite 3710. His telephone number is 538-5559. All mail should be sent to: 1594 West North Temple, P.O. Box 145610, Salt Lake City, Utah 84114-5610. All three work under the State Planning Coordinator. The new State Planning Coordinator is Wes Curtis, who will work out of the Cedar City office. Bruce Ratzlaff will be leaving RDCC/DNR in less than three months due to rollbacks.

The new Center will coordinate comments and assist with policy and planning. DNR priority item comments should be sent directly to Thomas Brill and Glade Sowards. They will be assisting with comment coordination and research for the department. Non-DNR priority item comments should be sent to Carolyn with a copy to Tom and Glade. The coordinated DNR priority item comments will be approved by Kathleen and forwarded to Carolyn.

Network Connection Problems – Carolyn Wright

Network connection problems are related to the move from the GOPB. The laptop computer network was also unable to login and connect with the Internet during the meeting.

Wildlife Habitat Rule – Bill Schlotthauer

The Wildlife Board has approved additional authority to RDCC in regard to wildlife habitat designation and management petitions. RDCC will review these management proposals and plans and make recommendations through GOPB pursuant to RDCC rules. See attachment pursuant to Rule R657-48, Implementation of the Wildlife Species of Concern and Habitat Designation Advisory Committee (Committee). Kathleen Clarke can invoke this rule at her discretion. The Committee will consist of the DNR Executive Director, and the DWR, DOGM and DWR directors. Other DNR directors may be sought to hear the petitioners as needed. This Committee will hear testimony, review supporting documents and data, and then forward its recommendations to RDCC. This rule will have a two-year trial period. DNR expects the rule to be invoked, at most, three to six times per year. This process will provide additional opportunities for other interested parties to be involved in habitat designation and management decisions.

RDCC will review the Committee's recommendations for habitat designation and management and will provide comments and recommendations. RDCC will have three choices: 1) Approve; 2) Reject; or 3) Remand the recommendations to the Committee for modification. Reviewed items will be handled as regular agenda items or through the expedited review process. In some cases, a RDCC subcommittee may be convened to review the Committee's

recommendations. In rare instances, such a subcommittee may be comprised of experts from RDCC member agencies. Committee members whose agencies participated at the Committee level will have the option to participate at the RDCC level. The subcommittee minutes should note those agencies that choose to abstain from participating. Those agencies choosing not to participate at the RDCC level need to be available for technical advice as needed.

A RDCC comment letter will be forwarded to the State Planning Coordinator for the Governor to sign that states the RDCC position on the recommendations. The RDCC Vice-Chair and Kathleen may discuss how to handle a particular agenda item.

III. Report for Agencies on Any Anticipated Projects

COE has received a permit application for dredging Bear Lake. Pacific Corp hopes to dredge the inlet channel to the Lifton Pump Plant to deliver contractual water downstream. This application may affect Idaho and northern Utah irrigators, marinas on the south end of the lake and homeowners. The hearing will be held on Thursday, August 16, 2001, at 6:30 p.m., at Montpelier, Idaho. Contact Robert Flowers, COE, in Boise, Idaho for more information. This will be on the next agenda as a RDCC item.

Glade will check with the department regarding priority items for the RDCC agenda and will email the committee.

IV. Review of Proposed Items as Listed on the Project Management Library

The committee was unable to discuss this agenda item due to computer difficulties. The following items were discussed:

Forest Service planning cycle is starting. The Uinta National Forest Plan comments are due Tuesday, August 28, 2001. The Wasatch-Cache comments will have an extended deadline. Carolyn will email the deadline for comments.

BLM planning cycle is also starting with the Vernal field office. Each BLM field office will have one management plan for their jurisdictional area. This will replace individual resource area management plans.

A Drought Meeting will be held on Wednesday, August 15, 2001 to discuss water conservation strategies.

Comment coordination for Forest Service and BLM planning may require a subcommittee due

to the reduction in GOPB staffing. John will take a significant role in drafting comments for the state letter. RDCC will become more involved.

Eldon Bingham, Urban Planning, at UDOT received a letter from John Harja regarding an EIS project. Comments should be forwarded to DEQ, Division of Air Quality and RDCC should receive a courtesy copy.

RDCC Meetings will be held at DNR until further notice. The next meeting will be held at 9:00 a.m., on Tuesday, September 11, 2001, in room 314.

V. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

Attachment -

Book Cliffs Resource Management Plan Bonanza Herd Ea/Finding of No Significant - Jean Nitschke-Sinclear

About a month ago BLM delivered to members of the RDCC, a final environmental assessment, and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) document covering the Book Cliffs Resource Management Plan amendment involving the Bonanza Wild Horse Herd. Recent data, information and management actions taken since 1985 have afforded BLM an opportunity to reconsider its 1985 RMP decision to remove the Bonanza wild horse herd. The Bonanza wild horse herd area is located about 30 miles southeast of Vernal in an area currently undergoing intensive energy exploration and supporting infrastructure development. The proposed decision would establish the Bonanza herd area as a Herd Management Area and establish an Appropriate Management Level (the maximum number of wild horses allowed on the HMA) at 85 animals.

Our purpose here today is to request an expedited review and answer any questions or provide additional clarification regarding this plan amendment.

What kind of livestock grazing takes place in the area now? How does the proposed decision differ from the existing situation regarding the assignment of AUMs? The area is grazed by winter sheep. The 1985 RMP set a cap on AUMs for livestock. That cap set a limit on the AUMs available for use based on the average high livestock use for three years (between 1975 and 1982) and active preference. The proposed decision would remove that cap and allow grazing permittees the opportunity to go to full active preference. The AML of

85 animals, the maximum number of wild horses allowed, would occur about every four years. BLM is on a 4-year schedule of gather and remove to maintain established AMLs. So, the Bonanza herd would be gathered every 4th year and reduced to a minimum population of 40 animals, then allowed to naturally increase to 85, then gathered and reduced.

What restrictions would be imposed on other users of the area? The Bonanza herd is an atypical herd. Conceptually, a wild horse herd is one that is fairly well isolated from human interaction and disturbance. This herd is located within an area currently undergoing intensive oil and gas development and infrastructure construction—and the herd is thriving. Therefore, based on this information, BLM would not impose any restrictions to other users in the area that would limit their permitted usage.

Where would the adoption actions take place? Where would the animals removed reside, at a local facility or national facility? After the horses are gathered and excess animals removed, current Bureau policy requires that the home state offer the animals for adoption at two in-state adoption events. Should any of those horses not be adopted, then they are moved to staging facilities and/or sanctuaries located throughout the nation.

Is there sufficient water for wildlife, livestock and horses? Does BLM anticipate needing additional water developments, like springs, seeps? The proposed decision does identify about 25 additional reservoirs would be needed to insure adequate water and to insure proper distribution of horses and wildlife throughout the area. About 15 existing reservoirs outside the herd area would be modified through fencing to prevent wild horses using the, thus eliminating a temptation for wild horses to leave the herd management area. The needed reservoirs within the herd management area would involve surface runoff waters only. Any erosion control structures associated with energy development would be constructed for watershed protection and not animal watering structures.

Who are some of the permittees? Lynn Siddoway, Dean Chew, Morapas Sheep Company.